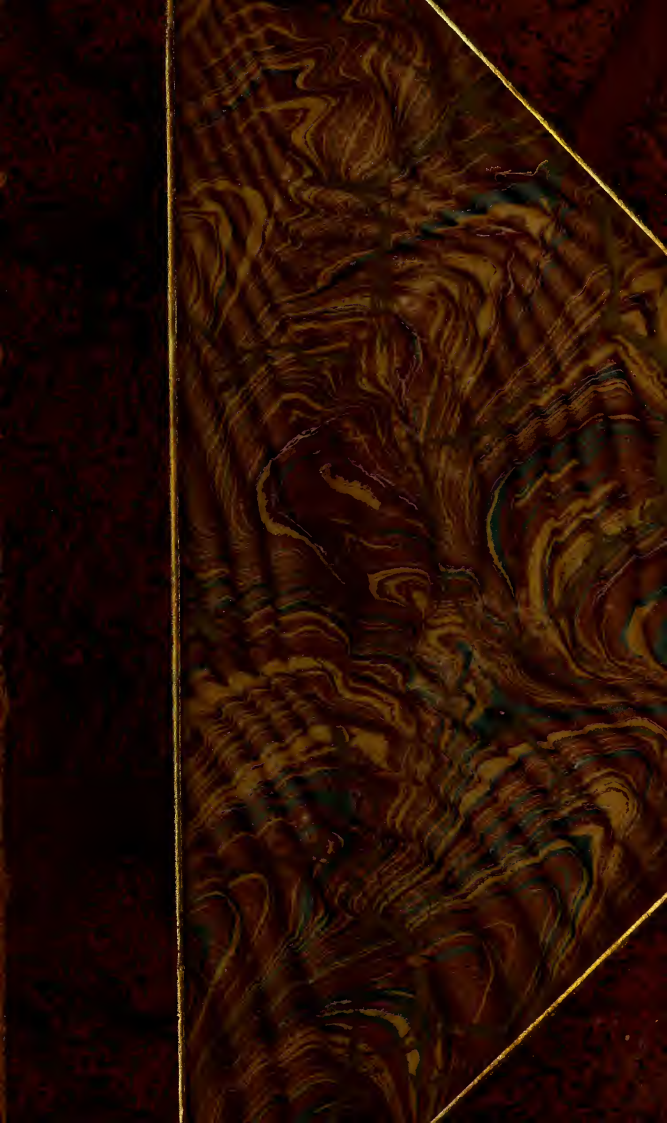




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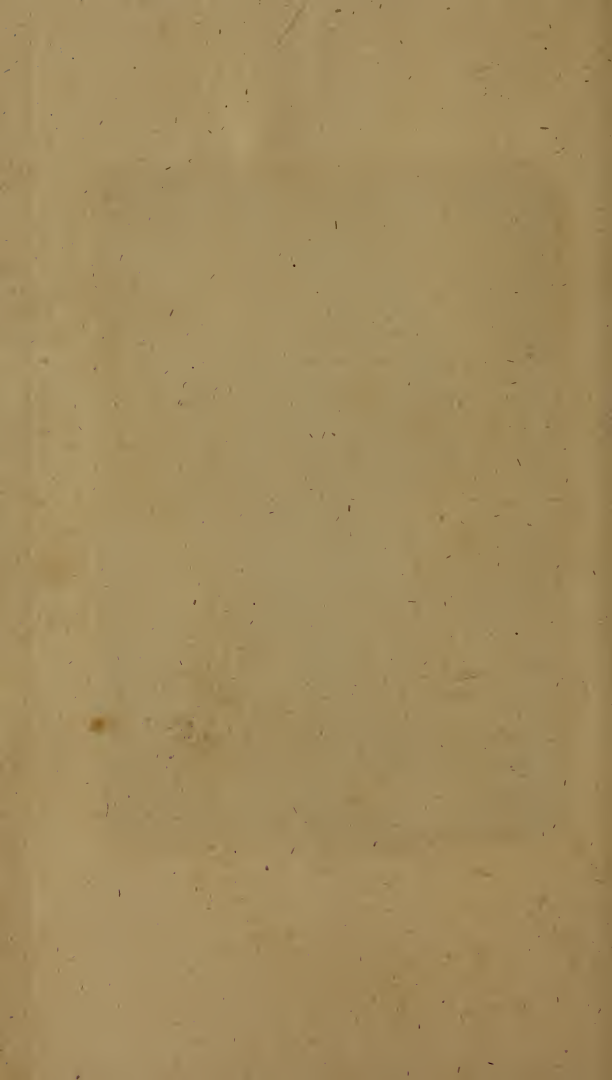
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XXXVI



Peter Cossart.





A.N. fecit.

One morn he call'd me from the hut—

"These glittering spears; these clanging shields,

ELCHO CASTLE;

OR,

EDMUND & VELINA.



Descend from thy wall, harp of Cona, with thy voices
three! Come with that which kindles the past: Rear the
forms of old, on their own dark brown years!

OSSIAN.

STIRLING:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY C. RANDALL:

1796.

ELCHO CASTLE is situated in Strathearn, upon the river Tay, a few miles below the Town of Perth ; and is now the property of the Earl of Wemyss.

It is frequently mentioned by blind Harry, in his life of Sir William Wallace ; and in these days, must have been a place of considerable strength.

Its romantic situation, the magnificence of its building, its spacious halls and antiquity, suggested it to the author of the following little piece, as being a place well suited, for laying the scene of a Tale of Fancy.

ELCHO CASTLE.

WASH'D by the rolling streams of Tay,
Near where the Erne blends ;
With lofty towers and battlements,
There Elcho Castle stands.

Where many doughty Lords have dwelt ;
In Chivalry renown'd,
Who, in their Country's cause could bruik
A fore, or deadly wound.

Lord Bertram own'd these stately halls,
Lord Bertram, who'd defend
The poor man 'gainst oppressions arm,
And stand his steady friend.

He wedded, when in early life,
Sweet Eleonor the fair,
Fam'd for the beauties of her face,
And for her virtues rare.

This peerless fair, admir'd by all,
In mutual love did live ;
Indulgent heaven had pour'd a store,
Yet, had one boon to give.

No offspring they, to grace their board,
The source of future hope,
To cheer the gloomy eve of age,
When they to earth must drop.

But, who's a right, to claim from Heav'n
More than it would bestow
Oft, what appears to us a bliss,
Is source of future woe.

Yet Heaven was pleas'd that boon to grant,
To bless this happy pair ;
In time was born ;—in time grew up
A lovely daughter fair.

Her father and her mother's worth
Was planted in her breast,
And on Velina's lovely form
Her mother's was imprest.

And many Lords, in courteous style,
Did her affection crave ;
But, none did ever gain her love,
Save Edmund young and brave.

He often had with Bertram fought,
When Scotland was oppress'd ;
And he, to Elcho's stately halls,
Was still a welcome guest.

His birth unknown, and dire the fate,
That kept his birth obscure ;
Perhaps, some Knight or Lordling born,
Though then dependant, poor.

A handsome form, a gen'rous soul,
Stor'd with each manly grace,
Where courage, mercy, friendship shar'd
Alike in it a place.

He woo'd Velina's tender heart,
In vain he did not woo ;
And oft, by mutual plighted faith,
Each vow'd they would be true.

Oft, did they stray the verdant mead,
Or fought the shady grove,
And every moment as it pass'd,
They thought and talk'd of love.

But as they lov'd, them prudence bade,
Their mutual passion hide ;
Though Edmund found Lord Bertram kind,
He knew his lordly pride.

But all their care could not deceive
Lord Bertram's watchful eye ;
He saw the tender glance that pass'd ;
And mark'd the love-sick sigh ;

He saw the anxious wish they had,
The secret bower to seek ;
And mark'd the rose that whilom bloom'd,
Fade on Velina's cheek *.

Thus, soon, he fear'd, his flatt'ring hopes
Of an alliance great,
With some rich Lord in wealth and power,
Would meet abortive fate.

One day, he Edmund drew aside,
While rage his face express'd ;
And in a style he seldom us'd,
He thus the youth address'd ;

“ Perfidious wretch ! is't thus that thou
“ My friendship dost repay ?
“ To steal my daughter from my arm,
“ My confidence betray ;

* “ Mark'd the roses as they wither'd
Fast on Jeanie's lovely face !” M'NIEL.

“ Thou upstart vile ! who lately toil’d,
 “ To gain a scanty bread ;
 “ I took thee from thy wretched Cot,
 “ Now by my bounty fed.

“ Begone ! and instant leave my dome,
 “ Nor tempt my veng’ance dread ;
 Which, if thy merits I’d requite,
 “ I’d pour upon thy head.

“ Begone !”—then instantly withdrew.

“ *A wretch, an upstart vile !*”—

Edmund repeated, while his breast

With grief and pride did boil.

Had any but Lord Bertram dar’d,

Him, with such names to brand ;

Longer must needs have been his sword,

More dext’rous far his hand.

“ *I took thee from thy wretched Cot !*”—

“ Curs’d be the fatal day,

“ That e’er from that contented Cot,

“ First caus’d my steps to stray :”

He said—then sought Velina’s bower,

And found the maid alone,

Whom, Bertram fir’d with rage, had left,

And told what he had done.

“ Spare ! spare !” she cried, “ Oh ! Edmund spare

“ My sick, my broken heart ;

“ Forbear to say the word—*Adieu !*

“ Since now, that we must part.

“ Away ! and leave these halls I hate,

“ Bereft of all I lov’d ;

“ And oh ! forget, my Edmund dear,

“ I e’er thy suit approv’d.

" For soon, I fear, I will resign
 " This sicken'd lease of life ;
 " Or should I live, it never shall,
 " To be, but Edmund's wife.

" Away ! and when a distant space,
 " Thy love from thee removes ;
 " In ev'ry sun-beam see her smile,
 " Hear on each breeze—*She loves.*

" Nor time, nor fate shall change my love,
 " Thy absence I will mourn,
 " Till time and fate with cru'lt'y tir'd,
 " Shall bid my love return.

" But e'er you go, thee I conjure,
 " To tell the tale you shun ;
 " By all I've learnt, by all I see,
 " Thou art not Edgebert's son.

" Do not refuse, but to thy love,
 " This secret pray impart ;
 " If full of woe, 'twill well besit
 " Her sick, her broken heart."

" Since you demand," the youth reply'd,
 " The story I will give,
 " E'er now I would, but fear'd you'd think,
 " 'Twas meant but to deceive.

" Already, my Velina knows,
 " How Edmund was employ'd,
 " E'er glory and the din of arms,
 " Him from his Cot decoy'd ;

" How chearful he with Edgebert toil'd,
 " And careless drew the net ;
 " The fish we caught supplied our wants,
 " For these, they were not great.

- “ One morn, he call’d me from the hut,
 “ Edmund, says he, behold
 “ These glitt’ring spears, these bronzed shields,
 “ Now borne by warriors bold.
- “ See ! where they wind their flipp’ry path,
 “ Mid crags bedrench’d with snow :—
 “ This is the band, Lord Bertram leads
 “ Against our English foe.—
- “ ’Tis glory, and his Country’s cause,
 “ That calls him to the field ;
 “ And many a corpse shall lye in blood,
 “ E’er Elcho’s Lord will yield.
- “ While thus he spoke, I felt my breast,
 “ With heat unusual fir’d ;
 “ To seek for glory in the field,
 “ Of Edgebert I requir’d.
- “ Yes go, he said, but Edmund, I
 “ A secret will impart,
 “ Which oft hath fill’d with tears my eyes,
 “ With grief my aged heart.
- “ One morn, as on the beach I stood,
 “ And trim’d my little boat,
 “ Some distant groans, borne on the breeze,
 “ As from the sea were brought.
- “ I listen’d,—then they died away,
 “ Now heard,—they died again ;
 “ In vain my eyes fought through the mist
 “ That hung upon the main.
- “ But as the breeze began to calm,
 “ The groans again I heard ;
 “ And slowly, as the mist withdrew,
 “ A floating wreck appear’d.

(9)
“ Then quickly from the beach, I launch’d
“ Into the sea, my boat ;
“ And ’gainst the waves, still rolling high,
“ With lusty strokes I fought.

“ At length, the floating wreck I reach’d,
“ And found a helpless dame,
“ Cold were her hands, and pale her cheek,
“ Yet liv’d the vital flame !

“ With speed, I row’d back to the shore,
“ Fearful she might expire ;
“ I took her to my humble Cot,
“ And rous’d my dying fire.

“ Whate’er could tend her to restore,
“ Annette my wife applied,
“ With care she nurs’d the vital spark,
“ To soothe her woes she tried.

“ Another day, she only liv’d,
“ Painful was that day too ;
“ A child she bore, and then expir’d ;—
“ Edmund ! that child was you.

“ Her tale, there was no time to learn,
“ From whence, or whither bound ;
“ But on a corpse, cast on the shore,
“ These pictures twain were found.

“ This is the picture of thy dame,
“ Her very face divine !
“ Edmund ! as like as that clear pool
“ Reflects this face of mine.

“ And this, the picture of the man,
“ I found cast on the sand !
“ For both are present to my mind,
“ As if they there did stand.”—

(10)

Here paus'd the youth, then from his pouch
 A little box he drew ;
 " Velina ! there, my parents are,
 " Parents, I never knew !"

" Shew me the pictures," Bertram cried,
 As to the bower he sprung ;
 He look'd amaz'd—his eye-balls roll'd,
 His lip in silence hung.

(Edmund he saw go to the bower,
 He follow'd him in haste ;
 And in a thicket near, conceal'd,
 He heard all that had pass'd.)

" Edmund ! forgive," Lord Bertram cried,
 While on his neck he hung ;
 " Forgive the harsh injurious words,
 " Which rage forc'd from my tongue.

" This is my brother's picture here,
 " Who, half these lands did own ;
 " And Edmund, now his right devolves
 " On you, his only son.

" To France, he fled with his young king,
 " David * great Bruce now gone ;
 " When Baliol † back'd by English arms,
 " Usurp'd the Scottish throne.—

" He took with him his new made bride,
 " Rosina, young and fair ;
 " Time pass'd away, of them till now,
 " Nought could I ever hear."—

“ 'Tis I, that must forgiv'ness ask ;
“ The wrong was on my part ;”
(Edmund reply'd) “ that e'er I dar'd
“ To woo Velina's heart.

“ Still hold the land, all I request,
“ Is sweet Velina's hand,
“ And soon, the holy father Rhind,
“ Shall tie the nuptial band.”

“ Ah ! gen'rous youth ! dost thou forgive
“ The wrong I have thee done ?
“ Ah, would to Heaven ! thou sooner hadst
“ Thy birth, to me made known.

“ Yes, take Velina to your arms,
“ Thee her I freely give,
“ May Heaven, its choicest blessings pour,
“ And happ'ly may ye live.—

“ This night, the holy father Rhind
“ Shall tye the nuptial knot ;
“ And in the feast, the dance, the song,
“ All wrongs shall be forgot.

“ And half the lands I now possess,
“ To you shall be restor'd ;
“ This I'll proclaim, the vassals shall
“ Now own you as their Lord.”

As when the ship by boist'rous gales,
Is tossed to and fro ;
Now mounts on high, and now is hid
Deep in th' abyss below.

The sails, the helm do uselefs prove
'Gainst the unruly wave ;
Aghast the mariner doth stand,
And dreads a watry grave.

But see! the storm begins to calm,
 The wish'd for port is near,
 And now in safety gains the land,
 When, joy takes place of fear ;

So, Edmund and Velina, who,
 So lately plung'd in grief ;
 From all the pangs of woe they felt,
 Now, find unhop'd relief.

Their souls no bounds of joy do know,
 As through the crowd they glide,
 And Edmund to the altar leads
 His young and blushing bride.

The feast was spread, and joy did smile,
 The shell of mirth went round ;
 The song was rais'd, the spacious halls
 Did echo back the sound.

And Edgebert, to whom Edmund ow'd
 His life, Velina, all ;
 In his old age, a shelter found,
 In Elcho's stately hall,

F I N I S.

